

Talk Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 34 of the Talk Housing newsletter, packed with information for tenants and leaseholders. We hope you enjoy it and if you have any feedback or ideas for future issues we would love to hear them.

Please email
community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

WINTER 2026 ISSUE 34



Your voice matters: building a better housing community

Inside

3. Meet Zaida – Housing Champion 5. Empowering leaseholders: Q&A with the co-chair of the Leaseholder Engagement Panel 9. Building a more neuroinclusive community

  @royal_greenwich  royalgreenwich  greenwichcouncil  royalgreenwich.gov.uk/follow-whatsapp

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing

To opt out of receiving Talk Housing, please contact:
community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk


ROYAL borough of
GREENWICH

5 minutes with Cllr Pat Slattery



By the time you receive this, we will be well into January 2026, but I hope not too late to wish you and your families a very happy new year.

We are all still struggling with rising prices of seemingly everything. Many of us will also be counting the costs of Christmas celebrations as well.

The council can provide some help to help you cope in these difficult times. This could include debt advice, one off emergency hardship payments and sources of help for you to keep up your physical and mental health well-being. Visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/money-help for details.

If you haven't already got a Greenwich One Card, you might also want to apply for one when you join any of our libraries (bring two proofs of address). It gives a discount off goods in a range of shops: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/one-card

Of course, as well as feeling the pinch in our purses, some of us can feel the pinch of a little extra fat after the festive season. You may like to head to Woolwich Waves, the brand-new leisure centre in the middle of Woolwich town centre, which is now open. Visit our website at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/woolwich-waves to find out more.

There is a fantastic range of facilities including pools, a gym, a café, a sauna and more. Numerous buses stop just outside the centre, and it is very close to the Woolwich train and DLR stations. We have other leisure centres dotted around the borough. Take a look at our website or pop into your local library for more information.

Pat Slattery

Cabinet Member Housing Management, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness



We're here to help

If you are struggling to pay your rent, please speak to your Income Officer.

Our Income Officers can agree an affordable repayment arrangement and give advice on further support.

They can also refer you to the Universal Support Team for guidance with your Universal Credit claim.

The Universal Support Team can check whether your income could be maximised with additional welfare support, ensure your housing costs are being paid at the highest eligible rate, and identify any disability benefits you may be missing out on.

They can also assist with claims or disputes you may be having with the DWP. If you do not receive Universal Credit, your Income Officer can refer you to another team for benefits advice.

Call your Income Officer on the number at the top of your rent statement or email rent-account-enquiries@royalgreenwich.gov.uk



Getting Things Done

We're investing £60 million of one-off funding to Get Things Done in Royal Greenwich - tackling fly-tipping, keeping the borough safe, fixing roads and much more.



Want to learn more about the campaign?

Visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/Getting-Things-Done

Residents corner!

Meet Zaida – Housing Champion

What you do as a Housing Champion? As a Housing Champion, I do a lot of listening to the community! I pay attention to issues and check in on people, for example, if a neighbour isn't out as much as usual. It's about making sure everyone is okay and providing support if needed.

For example, if someone needs help in the garden, we find volunteers. I also assist residents by reporting problems in their homes - such as broken lights - that they may not have time to address themselves.

I communicate with the council, making tenants aware of council meetings and other opportunities. I also help with translation for residents who don't speak English by connecting them with someone who speaks their language. If you love where you live, you care.

What motivated you to become a Housing Champion?

I've lived in Greenwich since July 1997 and started volunteering just six months later. I didn't speak English at the time, so volunteering helped me learn and connect with the community. My friend Valerie encouraged me to get involved in Housing Champion work.

Recently I met Councillor Pat Slattery and Tony from the council's Community Participation team and with their support, encouragement and guidance through the training, and my background in volunteering, becoming a Housing Champion felt

like a natural next step. I've now been in the role for about two or three years.

What do you like about your neighbourhood?

I live in Greenwich Creekside ward. It's architecturally special, but what truly makes it unique is the community. It's incredibly multicultural - many languages and nationalities are represented. I've never felt like a foreigner here; I've always felt welcome.

I'm also chair of the residents' association, where we help people connect and support each another.

What advice would you give to someone interested in becoming a Housing Champion?

Do it soon! Giving your time to something is so good for you. It helps with communication, meeting people, and gives you purpose.

You've won an award recently – could you tell us more about that?

I'm the founder of Dominicanos en Acción Londres - the only registered Dominican diaspora group in the UK. Last year, I was invited to the Dominican Republic, where I received the Mr. Oscar de la Renta 2024 Dominican Emigrant Award, in recognition of my work with the Dominican and wider Latin American community here in the UK. It was a proud and special moment for me - a reminder of the impact of community work and the power of doing good.



Quickfire questions

What do you do in your spare time? I love walking - Greenwich has many green spaces, like Oxleas Wood and the Thames Path.

What's your favourite part of the day? Getting home at the end of the day and sitting down with my family.

Home-cooked food or takeaway? Home-cooked, by my daughter. I love traditional Dominican dishes like Sancocho (stew made with assorted meats, root vegetables, and plantains) and La Bandera (rice, red beans, and stewed meat), as well as a Sunday roast!

What would your superpower be? Getting people to work together. The power of community lives in all of us.

If you're interested in becoming a Housing Champion, or to find out more, email community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk



Talk Housing

You spoke, we listened!

Our new Resident Engagement Policy shows how we'll listen more about things like repairs, safety, parking and rent, share updates more clearly and make it easier for people to get involved.

What's changed?



You said: Don't hold all Borough-Wide Housing Panel meetings in Woolwich.

We'll do: We'll hold meetings in other parts of the borough too, and make sure venues are easy to get to.



You said: Include neurodiverse residents more.

We'll do: We've added this to the policy and will check that our work is fair for everyone.



You said: Make it clear who's in charge at meetings.

We'll do: We'll name the senior officer responsible for each meeting.



You said: Share updates in the Talk Housing newsletter.

We'll do: We'll add a regular section showing what's changed because of your feedback.

Getting involved in your housing community

You can take part as little or as much as you like - every level of involvement is important, and support is available if you want to do more.

Resident groups and panels – including some new areas for you to get involved in:

- **Borough-Wide Housing Panel** – addresses housing issues across the whole borough
- **Tenant-Led Scrutiny Panel** – looks at how things are working and suggests improvements
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel** – makes sure everyone is treated fairly
- **High-Rise Resident Panel** – for people living in high-rise blocks with a focus on building safety
- **Leaseholder Engagement Panel** – for people who have bought their property from the council
- **Task and Finish Groups** – short-term groups for specific projects

Other ways to get involved

- **Housing Champions** – three levels of involvement to suit you
- **Estate Walkabouts** – join staff to check your local area
- **Spot Checks** – help check cleaning on estates and empty homes
- **YourView** – sign up and see what's happening each month
- **Consultations** – share your views on changes to services

Next steps

We will work with you to create a resident-friendly version of the policy which uses plain English. Read the full Resident Engagement Policy at **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/resident-engagement-policy** or visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/YourView**

Empowering leaseholders: Q&A with the co-chair of the Leaseholder Engagement Panel

Our Leaseholder Engagement Panel was created to give leaseholders a stronger voice and help shape improvements in housing services. We spoke to resident co-chair, J. Oyedeji, about his priorities and why this role matters.

What motivated you to take on an active role in the new leaseholder panel? We've never really had a voice as leaseholders, and I've been pushing for this for a very long time. When the opportunity came up to co-chair the panel, I put myself forward - there's never been an avenue for officers to sit down with leaseholders and hear their concerns, and this panel finally creates that opportunity.

From your perspective, what are the biggest challenges leaseholders currently face, and how can the panel help address them? One of the biggest challenges is limited communication, especially when it comes to charges.

Leaseholders pay management fees as part of service charges yet often feel information doesn't reach them clearly. The panel can help by creating a platform for leaseholders to raise issues and share ideas. It's important that feedback leads to positive action and that councils are held accountable for delivering improvements and communicating clearly. By focusing on one key topic at a time, we can explore issues in detail and work towards practical solutions.

What key priorities or goals do you hope to achieve during your time leading the panel?

My main priority is fairness - across bills, communication, and the standard of repairs. Leaseholders often feel they're paying more but getting less. Addressing these areas will encourage engagement and make things easier for the council too. While I'm firmly on the side of leaseholders, I'm committed to working with the council to achieve real results.

Finally, what message would you like to share with fellow residents about the role of the leaseholder engagement panel and how they can get involved?

Don't sit in silence - get involved and speak out. Talk to your Housing Champions. This is your opportunity to raise concerns and have them discussed with officers. The panel is resident-led and co-chaired by a leaseholder, so this is your chance to be heard.

To register your interest in joining our Leaseholder Engagement Panel visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/leaseholder-panel





Rescued! Rare mural discovered while building social housing finds new home

A rare artwork that was discovered on a site where the council is building new social housing has been restored and moved to a local primary school.

The Brooklands mural was created as a public artwork in the 1950s and is one of the best-kept examples of work by important post-war artist William Mitchell.

The mural was discovered in a disused community centre which was being demolished to make way for new social housing, as part of the 1,750 home Greenwich Builds programme.

Council officers, local residents, ward councillors and the Blackheath and Twentieth Century Societies worked together to get funding from the Heritage of London Trust, helping to pay for work to restore the artwork.

The mural was cleaned to remove decades of dirt, repair damaged areas, and restore colours to their original intensity.

It was then moved to its new home at Brooklands Primary School, just 250 metres from the old community centre and built as part of the same estate.

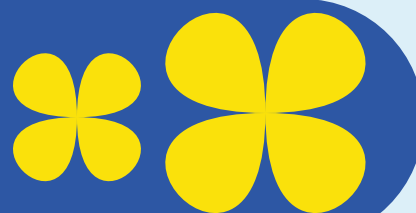
School pupils took part in a workshop to learn how restoration work is done before making their own artworks inspired by William Mitchell's work.

A celebration ceremony was held to officially welcome the mural in the school's assembly hall. **One pupil said that** "having this mural in my school makes me feel special".

William Mitchell produced a number of large-scale public murals and sculptures from the 1950s onwards, including the doors of Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral, the Egyptian Staircase in Harrods, Clifton Cathedral's Stations of the Cross, and a striking mural in the Curzon Cinema, Mayfair.

The Brooklands mural was completed in 1958 and was a London County Council Patronage of the Arts project for the clubroom of the Brooklands Park Estate, a post-war housing estate built in Blackheath between 1955 and 1958.

Making homes warmer and healthier



We're working to make council homes in Royal Greenwich warmer, better for the environment and cheaper to run.

As part of our Housing Our Greenwich programme we are investing over £50 million, including £10.5 million funding from the government's Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (WH: SHF Wave 3) to improve some of our homes with an Energy Performance Certificate below D.

We're planning to do this through a series of improvements to eligible existing homes or blocks to reduce the amount of energy they use and increase the standard of living in those homes.

This could include improvements like new insulation in walls or roofs, new windows and doors or modern heating and hot water systems. If your home is

selected you could benefit from lower energy bills, a warmer home in the winter, fewer draughts or cold spots, and less damp and mould.

You may be contacted by one of our consultants to arrange a short home survey. This survey will help our consultants confirm which homes qualify and what improvements would make the biggest difference. Once this review is complete, we'll write to you again to explain what's been approved and what happens next.

We'll keep you updated on our progress in future editions.

Please respond to stock condition survey letters



Thank you to everyone who has responded to our stock condition survey appointment letters.

We're carrying out these surveys across all council homes in the borough. It is a quick, visual check of the inside and outside of your home and takes around 20 minutes.

We use these surveys to understand the overall condition of your home and to plan any future works that may be required. The survey is about your home's condition, not your tenancy or what you pay.

When you are contacted by one of our Resident Liaison Officers or a contractor for an appointment, please arrange this visit as soon as you can.

If we can't gain access to your home to do this survey this could result in us taking legal action against you, so please work with us as we aim to complete this important work.

If someone in your household has a disability or other medical need, then please let your RLO know or email **capital-investment-admin@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**. They will make sure we handle everything with care and flexibility.

For more information visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/stock-condition-survey**

Talk Housing



HouseProud: voices for change

February is LGBTQ+ History Month, a chance to recognise and celebrate LGBTQ+ communities past and present. In this issue, we're spotlighting HouseProud, our resident-led group working to make housing in Greenwich fairer and more inclusive for everyone.



What we've been doing

Helping with policies: Earlier this year, HouseProud gave ideas to improve the draft Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Some of our suggestions were accepted and will be in the final version.

Celebrating Pride: Last summer, we joined the Kidbrooke Pride event with our new banner and leaflets. These were designed with LGBTQ+ residents to help raise awareness and connect with the community.

Making services better: In October, we discussed barriers LGBTQ+ residents face when using housing services. Suggestions from that session are now being put into action and will form part of an improvement plan we hope to launch later this year.

Want to get involved?

If you're an LGBTQ+ tenant or leaseholder - or an ally who wants to help - and want to find out more, email YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Hear from Lee, a HouseProud member

"I'm a trans man with lived experience across a few different areas of diversity. I live in Plumstead."

I saw a piece in Talk Housing about six months ago saying this group exists and that it's specifically for LGBTQ+ housing issues. I wanted to do something useful and interesting, and this sounded like it might be both.

The HouseProud group is a great opportunity for me to get more familiar with the issues that affect us more broadly as a community. I've given feedback on the YourView sign-up form, especially around making some of the questions more inclusive, which helps councils identify what the issues are and support marginalised communities more effectively.

I'd also like to see more training for staff - misgendering someone on the phone or questioning their identity can be uncomfortable and sometimes forces people to disclose they're trans when they don't want to. A little education can make a huge difference.

I loved Kidbrooke Pride, especially the music and drag performances, which were really fun. The event also had stalls with important information on serious issues like harassment and domestic violence.

The HouseProud group is a friendly, welcoming group where your voice is heard. Every time I've raised an issue, people have listened and acted."

My LGBTQ+ History Month Hero

Noël Coward, the iconic playwright and composer known for his wit and unapologetic authenticity.

Help shape the future development of the borough

Royal Greenwich is one of the fastest growing boroughs in London, one of the greenest and one of the youngest.

It is a melting pot of cultures, has a rich naval and military history, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, flourishing creative industries as well as the longest stretch of riverside in London.

The borough is unique and needs a Local Plan. This is the main planning document that sets out the long-term aspirations for guiding future development. It will meet the unique needs of our local community over the next 15 years.



It includes a list of areas where development could happen and what could happen there, sets out how it will protect what is important and how it will respond to the climate emergency.

The draft Plan is divided into eight themes: Places, Housing, Economy, Town Centres, Design and Heritage, Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport.

We're asking for everyone to explore the draft Local Plan and give us their views on it by Sunday 8 February 2026.

Look out for more details of exhibitions in libraries, webinars and drop-in events.

You can also take part online at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/localplan-consultation

Building a more neuroinclusive community

Everyone experiences the world differently - and that includes how we communicate, process information, and interact with services.

To make sure all residents feel understood, included and heard, we've been working to improve how we can support and design services for neurodiverse residents across our estates.

What's changing

Following your feedback, we've developed a Neurodiversity Housing Action Plan. Some key improvements include:

Better communication options: Residents can now request to receive information by email rather than by post or phone.

Accessible online forms: Our repairs and housing web forms are being reviewed to make them easier to use, with clearer language and more flexible contact options.

Inclusive engagement: We're exploring new ways to involve residents in panels and meetings, recognising that some people may prefer to share their views individually rather than in group settings.

Training and awareness: Staff, Tenant & Resident Associations (TRAs), and community groups will be offered training on neuroinclusion and hidden disabilities to build understanding across our estates.

Policy development: Work is under way to ensure neurodiversity is recognised throughout our equality, housing and engagement policies.

How you can get involved

If you have ideas on how we can make our housing services more inclusive, or would like to share your own experiences, email community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk



Talk Housing

Our commitment to staff safety

The council has zero tolerance to any form of violence, aggression or discrimination towards our staff.

We want to help as many people as we can – this is made easier when our colleagues are met with the same kindness we show our communities when we're doing our jobs.



We will take action against residents or members of the public who display violent or abusive behaviour. This may include:

- Reporting it to the police
- Taking legal action, including tenancy enforcement taken
- Withdrawing or changing services you can access

We consider unacceptable behaviour to be any instance which causes or threatens physical injury or distress.

- Verbal or written aggression such as offensive language, swearing, unwanted or abusive remarks.
- Assault or attempted assault on others, including members of an individual's family.
- Brandishing of objects, weapons or threats of risk or injury to staff, service users or visitors.
- Antisocial behaviour such as stalking, invasion of personal space, offensive gestures, spitting, alcohol or drug-fuelled abuse.

Read more at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/zero-tolerance

Support when you need it

We know that sometimes, our services can be difficult to use, especially if you're going through a tough time or facing challenges. Our Resident Vulnerability Guide is here to help.

It contains examples of vulnerabilities and how we can support you. We know everyone's situation is different, and we understand that not all needs are visible or easy to explain. We also know that our systems and technology don't always work for everyone.

If something isn't working for you, please speak to a member of staff. We'll do our best to support you, even if it's something we haven't thought of yet.

We're committed to making our housing services accessible for everyone.

You can find the guide at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/extra-housing-support



Fire safety during the colder months



During the winter months, it's important that we all take extra care to prevent fires and stay safe, as colder weather often means increased use of heating, candles and electrical appliances.

Portable heaters

Do you work from home? Are you home a lot during the day and feeling the pinch?

Portable heaters are one of the most common ways to heat just one room while trying to save money on heating bills. However, if not used properly, they could cause a fire. Always read their instructions carefully and never leave them unattended.

Use candles safely

Did you know that flameless LED candles are a much safer alternative to real candles or tea lights?

If you must burn a candle, keep them on a heat-resistant holder and place them on a stable surface. Keep them away from anything flammable.

Never leave candles, or anything that burns like incense sticks and oil burners, unattended.

Always make sure that you put out candles when you leave the room or go to bed, making sure they are fully out.

Fairy lights

If you use fairy lights, make sure you unplug them before going to bed or leaving the house. Don't let them touch flammable materials like paper or plastic.

When you buy them, make sure they are from a reputable supplier and check for damage - never use broken or damaged fairy lights.

Are the contents of your home insured?

As your landlord, we insure the structure of your home, but the cover doesn't include what's inside it, such as your furniture and personal belongings.

Replacing the contents of your home could be very expensive. We work with the UK's largest insurer Aviva, to offer home contents insurance especially for council tenants.

With tenants' contents insurance, your personal belongings are insured against events including:

- fire
- theft
- flooding or escape of water
- accidental damage

The simple benefits:

- pay-as-you-go
- no excess to pay
- choose to pay with your rent

For that extra peace of mind, find out more by visiting royalgreenwich.gov.uk/contentsinsurance



Free bulky waste collection

Did you know that as a council tenant you can get rid of bulky waste for free?

This includes items like:

- furniture
- bed frames, bed bases and mattresses
- electrical items like fridges and freezers, TVs, washing machines and hoovers

Booking a collection is simple - just visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/bulky-waste

Looking for local events?

Discover free and low-cost activities in your area, from language classes and music workshops to dance, fitness, and community meetups.

Check **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/events** to see what's on near you

Rent increase

Councillors will be deciding on increases to rents and service charges for 2026/27 at the Full Council meeting in February. We will write to you as soon as the decision is made and tell you what it means for you.

More foster carers needed

We urgently need more foster carers for our local children. Foster carers receive 24-hour support, council tax exemption and financial benefits. You can also foster if you rent, own your home or are in permanent social housing. If you have the time and care to give, you could change a child's life.

Call **080 0052 1499** or visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fostering** to find out more.

Get council updates by email

Subscribe now to get the weekly council bulletin sent straight to your email inbox.

From bank holiday bin collections to free events for all the family, our weekly bulletin tells you everything you need to know.

Subscribe at **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/newsletter**

Looking for secure parking for your car, motorbike or mobility scooter?

Our garages on local housing estates are available for local residents to rent at affordable rates.

This month, we'll contact previous applicants and will soon open the garage list for new applications